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THE REVIVAL OF SCULPTURE IN EUROPE IN THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.

[*Plates II and III*].

I

The object of these papers is to examine the correctness of the generally-received opinion, that the revival of sculpture in other parts of Europe as well as in Italy was due to the influence of the school of the Pisani in the second half of the thirteenth century.

The superiority of Italian Art in all its branches and at all periods is so generally assumed as one of the indubitable axioms of criticism, that to question it at any period may be considered an unwarranted innovation. The real excellence of Italian Art is not to be questioned, but its comparative superiority to the art of other countries has been exaggerated by the character and abundance of the literary materials for a systematic acquaintance with it. From Vasari to Lanzi, from Ghiberti to Cicognara, from Alberti to Milizia and Ricci, historians of art, and critics, have handed down masses of information from which to work out a critical history of Italian Art. Not so with France; it possesses no written records of its monuments; the stones alone have been left to speak for themselves. The descendants of the men who raised these works had come to despise them, and to consider them only as relics of a hated past. Among the earliest to rise against such a feeling were Alexandre Lenoir¹ and Éméric-David,² the first in a practical the second in a theoretical manner. During the stormy days

¹He was born at Paris in 1762: at first a painter, he turned his whole attention after the revolution of 1789 to the preservation of works of art. He was made, in 1791, "garde général de tous les monuments des arts et effets précieux," in the convent of the Petits-Augustins. He produced a large number of writings on archaeological subjects.

²Toussaint-Bernard Éméric-David was born in 1755. He began his labors in the field of art-criticism in 1796. In 1801 The Institute awarded a prize to his essay, "Recherches sur l'art du statuaire." He filled with numerous writings the period which elapsed between this date and the time of his death, which took place in 1839.

of the French Revolution, when churches were being mutilated or destroyed, Lenoir manfully set to work, sometimes even at the risk of his life, to rescue what he could from the wreck,¹ and with this he formed the *Musée des Monuments Français*. Some years later Éméric-David wrote a series of works on Mediæval Painting, Mediæval Artists and French Sculpture.² His monograph on the history of French monumental sculpture is an authority to the present day;³ it was written in view of the complete ignorance of French Art shown by Count Cicognara in his history of Sculpture,⁴ but especially to refute the more culpable ignorance of the noted French art-critic Quatremère de Quincy, the oracle of the Classicists. It awakened Éméric-David's ire to read the latter's remark, which he quotes: "Il est certain qu'aux époques des XIII^e, XIV^e et XV^e siècles, la sculpture ou n'était pas pratiquée hors de l'Italie, ou ne l'était que par des artistes italiens. On peut en dire à peu près autant du XVI^e siècle. En France, ajoute-t-il, à peine peut-on citer, avant le XV^e siècle, le nom d'un seul sculpteur."

The reaction against the exclusive admiration of the classic renaissance did not really begin in France till many years after 1816, when the preceding words were written. The works of Didron,⁵ Gailhabaud,⁶ and especially Viollet-le-Duc,⁷ have now made it impossible for any critic to be entirely blind to the beauties of French sculpture, but the knowledge of it has not yet become so diffused as to secure, in general estimation, for the Gothic sculpture of France the

¹ The wholesale destruction which was being carried out in the departments of France was stayed by memoirs and reports emanating from the *commission des monuments* of which he was the leading spirit.

² *Histoire de la Peinture au Moyen-Age*, Paris, 1811-12; *Vies des Artistes anciens et modernes, architectes, sculpteurs*, etc. (written for the *Biographie Universelle* of Michaud); *Histoire de la Sculpture Française, accompagnée de notes et observations par M. J. du Seigneur*, Paris, 1862. One of his most learned works is his *Histoire de la Sculpture Antique*, composed of various memoirs, the principal being his *Essai sur le classement chronologique des sculpteurs Grecs*, published in 1806, 1807 and again in 1862, and his *Mémoires sur les progrès de la Sculpture Grecque*. All Éméric-David's writings have been edited by Paul Lacroix in 1862-63, some for the first time.

³ Labarte, in his *Histoire des Arts Industriels*, says that French monumental sculpture has no need of another historian than Éméric-David.

⁴ *Storia della Scultura dal suo risorgimento in Italia, sino al secolo XIX.*

⁵ Consult especially the review which he founded, the *Annales Archéologiques*, a treasure-house of erudition for the study of French art.

⁶ *Monuments Anciens et Modernes, and l'Architecture du V. au XVI^e Siècle.*

⁷ *Dictionnaire de l'Architecture Française.*

position due to its merits. I propose in these papers—which pretend to be only suggestive—to attempt a brief comparison of the relative excellence of Italian and French sculpture during the thirteenth century, and of their respective position in the history of art. In doing this, much familiar ground must be first reviewed in order to obtain a comprehensive view of the data. The justification of our essay is found in the fact that recent historians of art, although they appreciate with more or less enthusiasm the Gothic sculpture of France, avoid any comparison between the two countries, and that French writers themselves, however enthusiastic they may be, do not question the sacred tradition of Italian superiority. It is true that, in order to make such a comparison in an exhaustive and satisfactory manner, we need to know more than is yet known about the development of French sculpture. Schnaase's remark is correct, that French archæologists seem to have regarded their sculptures simply from the iconographic point of view to the exclusion of the artistic: thus the phases of the development and succession of styles, classification and relations of schools have been neglected by them. Viollet-le-Duc in the article "Sculpture" of his dictionary has indeed given a critical survey of the field from the artistic standpoint: in it he defends, ably and energetically, the sculptors of the thirteenth century. This brilliant but necessarily insufficient sketch has never been supplemented: still, certain landmarks stand out in clear relief and will be a sufficient guide in a general and preliminary study like ours. It may appear singular that the art of France alone should come into question and that no mention should be made of the schools of Germany and England. With regard to England there is no comparison possible, as sculpture never acquired, during either the Romanesque or the Gothic period, an importance comparable to that of the Continental schools. Germany, however, produced remarkable works, during the Romanesque period especially; works which, if considered singly, excite our admiration and make us wonder whence could have sprung the school from which they proceeded. The altar front of Basel and the choir sculptures of S. Michael at Hildesheim are most perfect embodiments of the finer elements of the Romanesque spirit. Still, especially during the Gothic period, there is so great a want of unity and continuity in German sculpture, that it is difficult to regard it as carrying out any general ideas or pursuing any systematic course.

The history of the development of sculpture in the various provinces of Italy from 1000 to 1250 is yet to be written; the theme has but few attractions except from the standpoint of historical science. We know that various contemporary schools existed in Venice, Lombardy, Tuscany and Southern Italy, each having special characteristics and attaining a certain growth, but none rising above mediocrity.

Some few works form an exception: the statues on the façades of the Cathedrals of Ferrara and Borgo San Donnino, on the Baptistery of Parma, &c., possess a certain dignity and rugged power; but precisely in these works we perceive a foreign influence, and the statues of Parma seem taken from some church in the south of France. In a few cases a Greco-Byzantine influence is clearly evident, for example in the works of Benedetto Antelami (end of twelfth cent.) of Parma, who was certainly the best sculptor of the pre-Pisan period. His relief of the deposition from the Cross, a work of an archaic but original and refined taste, contains some remarkable figures. Schnaase can hardly have seen it, for he describes the figures as thick-set and heavy: the contrary is the case, and the female figures in particular, with veiled heads and narrow folds of drapery, are conceived thoroughly in the Byzantine spirit. It may be objected that there did not exist any monumental Byzantine sculpture at this period: this is not entirely correct, for in Greek churches, and especially at Mt. Athos, a number of marble sculptures have been noticed, and, besides, Italy was full of small works in ivory and metal by Eastern sculptors. The most interesting and beautiful specimens of Greek marble sculpture of this period in Italy are the reliefs on two of the portals of the Baptistery of Pisa. On the lintel of one are spirited busts of the twelve Apostles, and below are scenes from the life of John the Baptist; in the northern portal the lintel is divided into seven arcades containing single upright figures representing SS. George and Michael, the Annunciation, &c.: these represent the best side of Christian Greek art, which, even in the late middle-ages, preserved traces of classicism, especially in the draperies, and had originated a style well adapted to express the Christian ideal.¹ The influence of such works was but small: in Pisa it can be traced to a certain extent, as

¹ It is a common error to suppose that, wherever in mediæval works a distinct classical element appears, this element must be foreign, indeed opposed, to the byzantine. Nothing can be more incorrect: in the East, as in the West, there were schools

also in Venice, but otherwise, with the few exceptions in the North, the inartistic and deplorably debased condition of sculpture in Italy previous to the time of Nicola Pisano is clearly apparent from the monuments. It is especially through contrast that the change brought about by the Pisan School at the close of the thirteenth century excites our admiration. A cursory glance at the various Italian schools of the Romanesque period will make this very evident.

In Tuscany, during the twelfth century, there seem to have been formed several centres where sculpture was cultivated with assiduity, and in many cases the names of the artists have been preserved. Pisa is represented by Bonusamicus,¹ Biduinus² and especially by Bonannus.³ Lucca may claim Robertus;⁴ Ridolphinus and Enrichus have also inscribed their names on the churches of Pistoja; so has Gruamons, though he is said to be a Pisan by birth. There is an apparent progress in the latter half of the twelfth century, the art of Bonusamicus and Biduinus is heavy and barbarous, while that of Gruamons has somewhat thrown off this rudeness and has become more symmetrical and artistic. Still, during the Romanesque period, Tuscany is even behind the rest of Italy in sculpture; and the reason is that she did not feel either of the two influences which

following different ideals, some a rude local type, others a hieratic formalism, and again others preserving the classical spirit; and this latter school is more properly called Greek, rather than Byzantine. An examination of Greek MSS. of this very twelfth century, shows that these three distinct styles flourished side by side: many a MS. in Paris and London contains miniatures even more classical than these Pisan reliefs.

¹ Bas-relief of Christ and the symbols of the Evangelists in the Campo-Santo with the inscription: *OPUS QUOD VIDETIS BONUSAMICUS FECIT PRO EO ORATE*. Photographed by Alinari (No. 12,118.)

² His known and signed works are: 1, a sarcophagus imitated from the antique, in the Campo-Santo, with a remarkable Latino-Italian inscription beginning, *BIDUINUS MAGISTER FECIT*; 2, a relief over the side-door of S. Salvatore at Lucca with *BIDUINO ME FECIT HOC OPUS*; 3, the Architrave and font of S. Casciano near Pisa, dated 1180 and with *HOC OPUS QUOD CERNIS BIDUINUS DOCTE PEREGIT*; 4, an architrave representing, with 28 figures, Christ's entry into Jerusalem, presumably from the Ch. of Altopascio near Lucca, now in a villa at Segromigno.

³ By his hand were the former bronze doors for the Cathedral of Pisa. We can judge of his style only from the doors of Monreale (1186), as the door of the transept at Pisa is evidently by an earlier master.

⁴ He executed a font in S. Frediano with the inscription, *ROBERTUS MAGISTER ME [fecit?] MCLII*.

affected the art of the other provinces of Italy, the byzantine and the romanesque. The South of Italy had long been under Greek rule, and the Norman Conquest did not put an end to the influence of the art of Constantinople—the artistic relations between the two countries always remained very close. Constantinople taught the West the art of niello; and sent its bronze doors to churches over all Italy from Venice to Rome and Salerno.¹ While the art of bronze-casting remained for this reason entirely byzantine, marble sculpture in Southern Italy included both a local current, of Latin origin, and a complex oriental current, which, beside the usual byzantine element, had another oriental spirit, probably Syrian, which was original but fantastic. Further North, in Venice, the influence of Constantinople was supreme both in metal and in stone, and the many reliefs of San Marco, though some bear Latin inscriptions, all betray a byzantine origin, either direct or indirect. In Lombardy and the rest of Northern Italy different influences were at work. At Verona, side by side with extremely barbarous works (e. g. façade of S. Zeno), are some of better art and more like the schools of Southern France (e. g. statue at S. Pietro Martire): here belong also the works of Wiligelmus and Nicolaus (1099-1139) at Modena, Ferrara and Verona. The purely Lombard style is well represented at S. Michele of Pavia, where Northern fancy runs riot. At Parma and Borgo San Donnino appears a school with better artistic perceptions, which does not, as is usual in Italy, confine itself to miniatures in stone, but works in a broad and massive style. The seated statues on the exterior of the Baptistery are dignified works of some artistic value, and the small reliefs in porphyry representing animals, real and fabulous, are full of life and reality and of the most finished workmanship. The interior is a museum of twelfth and early thirteenth century sculpture by very different hands: the best of them seem to be by Antelami.² At San

¹ S. Marco, Venice; S. Paolo, Rome; Amalfi, Trani, Monte Gargano, Monte Cassino, Salerno.

² The presentation in the temple (lunette over door of entrance) and Christ between the four cherubim and two angels (lunette over altar) and several single angels show the hand of Antelami, the two lunettes of the Flight into Egypt (opposite entrance) and David with his choir, (opposite altar) are by a very inferior artist. The sculptures representing the Labors of the Months, of which fifteen pieces are here and others are at the Museum, were found at the excavations of S. Udalrico (ancient amphitheatre). They are of a later date, belonging probably to the middle of the thirteenth century. With regard to the reliefs on the exterior, it would carry

Donnino, again, the sculptures of the façade are very unequal; some extremely barbarous and justifying Gally Knight's remark on "the neglect of all proportions, the heads as large as the bodies," etc. But Gally Knight does not seem to have considered the almost life-size statues of David and Ezechiel at the main portal, as well as some of the reliefs:¹ these are perhaps among the finest works of Romanesque sculpture in Italy.

To recapitulate; the Northern sculptors of the twelfth century whose works rise above mediocrity, were either influenced by transalpine art, like Antelami and his school, or were themselves foreigners, as Wiligelmus and the sculptor of the Verona font² probably were. With these exceptions it would appear that, while in France and other countries sculpture flourished as a monumental art during the Romanesque period, under the influence of Architectural law, in Italy alone was sculpture so subordinated to the smaller arts (miniature painting, ivory-carving, niello) through which the influence of Byzantium was exerted, that she produced, for the most part, insignificant and imitative works.

During the same period France presents a different picture. From the close of the eleventh to the end of the twelfth century a regular and progressive development is perceptible in the various schools which arose in her provinces. At the first glance we are struck by several fundamental differences which must ever be kept in view while comparing the works of France and Italy. Foremost among these differences is the respective role given to the plastic arts in the two countries; in Italy it was, as a rule, confined to the lintels of the church portals and to articles of church furniture, as pulpits, fonts and monuments. This custom precluded the

us too far if we should undertake to show what was by Antelami and what by his scholars: suffice it to say that on the same portal the sculptures of the lunette, archi-volt and architrave are evidently all by different hands and that the work of the master cannot be mistaken.

¹ The explanation of this great difference in merit is not difficult to find: many of the reliefs, e. g. those of the two towers, are evidently inserted, and their present position was not their original one: they have been taken from an earlier structure and used for the present façade. The best works are structural and contemporary with the architecture.

² According to Schnaase this sculptor was probably a German resident in Italy and brought under byzantine influence. In any case it is evident that this work, full of style, character and energy, was the work of some foreign artist, for nothing like it is to be seen in Northern Italy.

development of great systematic cycles of sculptures and gave an inorganic character to the art, it also did not allow the use of works in the round. The French artist, on the other hand, had a strong perception of the true relation of sculpture to architecture, and of their coöperative value; he crowded with life-size or colossal statues the deep recesses of the church porches and the niches of the façades, while he filled the archivolts and tympana with high-reliefs. In the south of France this display of sculpture reached the highest point of exuberance; at Angoulême and at S. Gilles every part of the façade was covered; even in the cloisters, statues were used as caryatides and were set against the great piers.

Another point of contrast between the two countries is, that in Italy the work has little distinct character and is entirely devoid of individuality, while the most striking feature of the French schools is their thoroughly national character, varied by deep local distinctions, and their clear-cut individuality, showing that with them art was not merely conventional, but an expression of thought in the forms which appealed the most strongly to their individual consciousness. The art may be hieratic, the figures architecturally stiff or artificially animated, according to the schools, but in the heads appears, what is unknown to the other Romanesque schools of Europe, a study of character and faithful portraiture, more Latin in the South, more Frankish and Gallic in the North and Centre. Strange as it may seem, the heads of the old portal of Chartres, for example, executed about 1140, are more true to the types among which the sculptor lived and worked than the heads of the thirteenth century statues in the northern portal of the same church, for Gothic sculpture followed rather certain general types than particular examples. Many illustrations of this fact might be brought forward. I give on the next page one of the heads from the 1140 portal of Chartres (Fig. 1).

The first among the French schools to become established were those of the South. Viollet-le-Duc distinguishes, at the beginning of this period (c. 1100), four schools, those of Toulouse, Limoges, Provence and Burgundy: that of the Ile-de-France did not develop until towards the middle of the twelfth century. The theory of a profound Byzantine influence on all these schools of the South becomes, every day, more untenable, and this influence, though its presence may be discerned here and there, was restricted, especially in the Burgundian school, to a minimum. The differences between these contemporary

developments are so fundamental that it seems hardly possible that they should be the product of the same civilization. At the two poles stand Provence and Burgundy; the former being influenced, more or less, by the numerous Roman works still extant throughout the region, while the latter separated itself from all traditions of the past. The sculpture of Provence is invested with a quiet dignity and repose: the rich details are welded with exquisite taste into a har-



(Fig. 1.)

monious unity, and this good taste makes the critic indulgent even if, as is often the case in the smaller reliefs, the figures are not always well-proportioned. In Burgundy, on the other hand, a finished technique was placed at the service of an exuberant fancy. If we might find fault with the want of imagination and of invention shown by the school of Provence, the opposite fault might be laid to the charge of the Burgundian school. It seems to be struggling to express an irrepressible life and energy, and this often resulted in

figures distorted and awkward in the extreme : here also, as is often the case, we find a keen sense of the grotesque, the humorous, and the horrible. The School of Toulouse possessed neither the repose and naturalness of the Provençal nor the energy of the Burgundian school; it leaned towards a union of high finish and artificially studied postures and treatment of drapery, and, although it felt the influence of the East more than any of the other schools, excepting, perhaps, that of Limoges, at the same time it added to this a rude attempt at dramatic effects and the imitation of nature.

To these ought to be added another school which extended to the north of that of Toulouse, from Cahors to Angoulême, joining the province of Poitou. The accompanying cut (Fig. 2) represents the figure of Christ from the large relief on the tympanum of the north portal of the Cathedral at Cahors.¹ This work belongs to the first part of the twelfth century, and shows that the school which produced it was in advance of the rest of France.

A far more important work of the same school is the contemporary façade of the Cathedral of Angoulême; its broad surface is covered with groups and single figures in high relief, which all belong, with but few exceptions, to the grand scene of the Last Judgment. The figure of Christ, in an aureole near the summit, is the exact counterpart of the Christ of Cahors, and almost suggests the same sculptor. This work shows us that the school was not able to conceive the harmonious union and co-ordination of the two arts. The sculpture is in no way organic—it does not form an essential part even of the ornamentation. Here also we can see a tendency to violent action less extravagant only than that of the Burgundian school. The same tendency is emphasized in the weird composition on the interior of the façade at Souillac. As a rule, however, there is in this school a nearer approach to beauty, without any attempt at realism, than is to be seen in the other Romanesque schools of France.

The school of the Ile-de-France carried out from the beginning the close alliance of sculpture and architecture, and many of the figures on the old portals of Chartres, Bourges, S. Denis, S. Loup, etc., seem almost integral parts of the architecture, so well do the long and immovable figures, the narrow parallel folds of drapery,

¹ This illustration, as well as the preceding, is taken from Viollet-le-Duc.



(Fig. 2.)

harmonize with the general architectural effect. By this subordination, it was inevitable that sculpture should lose in part its freedom of form, and that the interest of the details should be sacrificed to the general effect. Still, the principle was a good one, though defective in its application. By a gradual change this severe stiffness was lost, and greater life and freedom introduced during the development from the Romanesque to the Gothic, which took place, curiously enough, not in the South, but in the very province where sculpture had been most archaic. This transition can be seen as it passed, step by step, through its regular phases ; and this is one of the great attractions in the study of this period of French sculpture. The corresponding change in Italy took place three-quarters of a century later, and its causes are enveloped in obscurity : no natural or indigenous growth prepared the way for the school of the Pisani.

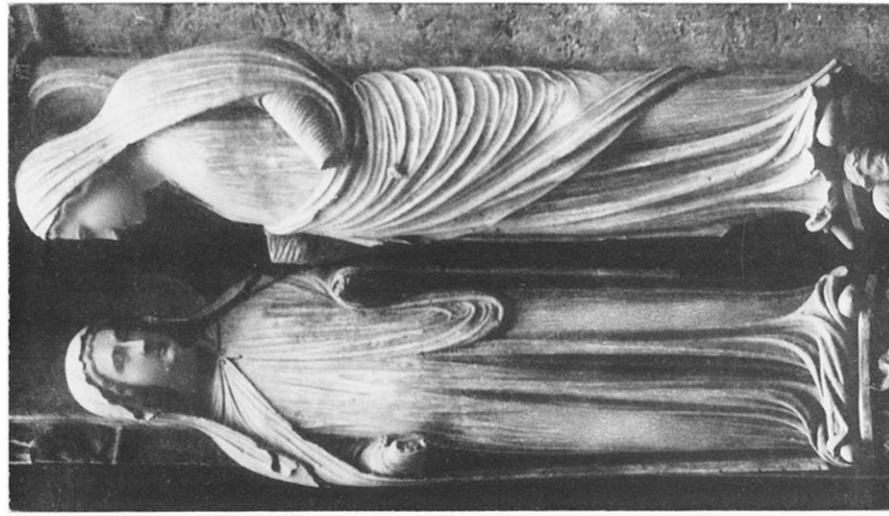
[*To be continued*].

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SIDE PORTAL OF NOTRE DAME, PARIS.

By Jean de Chelles, 1257.



STATUES FROM THE N. PORCH OF CHARTRES CATHEDRAL.